

The Official Website of the Office of Consumer Affairs & Business Regulation (OCABR)

Mass.Gov

Consumer Affairs and Business Regulation

Home > Consumer > Cable TV & Telecommunications > Cable TV > Consumer Rights & Fact Sheets > Consumer Rights Fact Sheets >



Cable Advisory Committee

Under Massachusetts regulations, an Issuing Authority ("IA") may appoint a Cable Advisory Committee ("CAC") to advise the IA throughout the licensing process. 207 C.M.R. § 3.01(3). In many instances, the CAC remains as an active committee throughout the term of the license. Currently, there are over two hundred and eighty CACs in the Commonwealth. The composition of the CAC is determined by the IA, and the IA may choose any number of persons it deems desirable to complete the committee.

The IA may, at its discretion, define the role and responsibilities of the CAC to the extent permitted under G.L. c. 166A. Thus, there is almost complete local control as to the tasks assigned to an advisory committee, so long as these tasks do not conflict with the statutory requirements of the IA in G.L. c. 166A. While an IA may delegate to a CAC the authority to negotiate a license agreement, an IA may not delegate authority to execute such an agreement.

CAC responsibilities vary according to the current status of the license or the objectives of the IA. The following list includes some typical responsibilities assigned to CACs in the Commonwealth:

- Inform and educate the public about cable television service;
- Assess the cable needs of the community and recommend policy changes;
- Conduct regular meetings with cable company representatives to discuss matters of mutual interest;
- Report to the IA on company compliance with the license;
- Supervise the cable operator's response to complaints;
- Respond to citizen's questions regarding the cable television system; and
- Keep abreast of community programming issues.

CACs are considered "governmental bodies" within the purview of the Massachusetts Conflict of Interest law, G.L. c. 268A, and are subject to their guidelines.

Recognizing that CACs fulfill an important and valuable link between the IA, the licensee, and the citizens of the community, the Competition Division seeks to build positive professional relationships with the CACs. Our staff works closely with local committees to educate them on the licensing process and improve information-sharing.

The Competition Division's program includes an informational presentation available to communities. Please feel free to contact the Competition Division to schedule a presentation or to discuss any cable licensing matter.

© 2009 Commonwealth of Massachusetts

7